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July 23, 1962.

TO: S/B - Mr. Bohlen

FROM: EUR - Richard H. Davis

SUBJECT: Position to be taken on Berlin in Talks with Gromyko  
at Geneva

1. We agree fully with the Secretary's comment (Secto 13) that it is most important for us to stand absolutely firm on the question of withdrawal of Western troops from Berlin. Any ambiguity from our side on this point would encourage the USSR toward accepting the risks of a separate peace treaty, which we believe the Soviets are still very reluctant to undertake. We agree also with the point in Secto 13 that a firm stand now will make the USSR more cautious about the accompanying measures on access controls if they do nevertheless decide to go ahead with the peace treaty.

2. It may be useful to repeat to Gromyko that signature of a separate USSR-GDR peace treaty is not a material consideration with us. What is important, and this the USSR should clearly understand, is that neither a separate treaty nor any other action to which we have not consented can deprive us of our Berlin rights and we intend to continue the exercise of those rights whether a treaty is signed or not.

3. We think it would be useful to press Gromyko further (Secto 25) as to what in concrete terms will happen to access controls if the USSR signs a peace treaty with the GDR. This question, perhaps more than any other point we could make, will compel the USSR to face up to the potentialities of nuclear war inherent in any Soviet or GDR blockage of access. We hope that the Secretary will not mince words in indicating that the West is prepared to use force in order to maintain its access to Berlin.

4. We note that Gromyko mentioned repeatedly that Berlin is a NATO base. His insistence on this point might offer some loophole. In order to continue to offer the USSR a prestige-saving

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escape from their cul-de-sac the Secretary might explore still further Gromyko's reaction to the possibility of distinguishing the troops in Berlin from "NATO forces" or "a NATO base".

5. It might be useful for the Secretary to cite Khrushchev's remarks to the Austrians that he did not fear war over the cutting of our military access to Berlin because we had not reacted violently to the Wall and point out very clearly that the Wall did not violate Western vital interests in Berlin while cutting our military access definitely would.

6. We suspect the Soviets have not yet definitely made up their minds as to their future course of action. At present they seem to be attempting to put on the maximum amount of pressure with threats of a separate peace treaty through every possible channel (although Gromyko has handled this somewhat cautiously) to see what is the maximum they can get through a prior agreement with the West. We suspect that only when they think they have the maximum offer from the West will they weigh this against what they think they could get by means of the peace treaty with no prior agreement and then choose the course which seems to offer the most.

**MUR:GHR:FECash, J.:**

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